

State Trooper, Todd Hanneken, of Decatur, Illinois, who lost his life on March 25.

Todd fulfilled his lifelong dream of becoming a state trooper. He was a 20-year veteran of the Illinois State Police and always went above and beyond the call of duty.

In 2018, Todd was awarded the Illinois State Police Medal of Honor for heroic actions he took to rescue a man out of a burning car, ultimately saving that man's life.

For so many, Todd was more than a state trooper. He was a husband, father, son, brother, and beloved friend. Those that knew Todd will remember him for his kindness and compassion. Todd cared deeply about his community, always wanting to help others in need.

A tragic accident took Todd's life, and my prayers are with his friends and family, both at home and with the State Police, and particularly his wife, Shelley; and sons, Ben and Nick. Todd was a hero in every sense of the word and will truly be missed.

RECOGNIZING U.S. CAPITOL POLICE FORCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, in March, the House passed legislation to award a Congressional Gold Medal to the men and women of the U.S. Capitol Police for their heroism on January 6 and for their daily efforts to protect the institutions of our democracy.

On April 3, once again, we saw an example, of not only the dangers in which they place themselves through their service, but also the courage they bring to that service.

In the short span of fewer than 100 days, the U.S. Capitol force lost three members as a result of attacks on the Capitol complex. Yesterday, we honored one of those Capitol policemen, Billy Evans. But in a real sense, we honored every member of the United States Capitol Police.

Some years ago, I lost a member of the Capitol Police who lived in my district, J.J. Chestnut. Wendy, his wife, was at the ceremony yesterday for Billy Evans. That was in 1998. He and Officer Gibson lost their lives in defending this Capitol on that date. And while a Congressional Gold Medal is a very fitting tribute, it can neither lessen the grief felt by their fellow officers nor reduce the sense of unease that so many of them must still be feeling today.

Mr. Speaker, this has been a challenging time for the Congress and for all of us, but it certainly has been a time of challenge for the Capitol Police force. And surely the force will be going through a period of change and adaptation for some time to come, as will all of us who serve here in the Capitol complex.

Mr. Speaker, I want to talk a moment on this floor to say thank you for

those who still stand watch at the doors and the vehicle barriers, who patrol the neighborhoods and the office buildings, who sit ready to respond quickly and courageously to any emergency, never knowing what the next alarm might bring.

Mr. Speaker, in particular, I thank the men and women who have served on the security detail that the Capitol Police have assigned to me in my role as majority leader. You get to know them as friends, as protectors, and as family.

Since being elected to House leadership, I have been privileged to know some of the best of the force. They are representative of an extraordinary group of people. In order to protect their safety and privacy, I will not share their names, but they know who they are. Each and every one of them not only have my immense gratitude and respect, but they have the admiration of my entire staff, whom they have gotten to know very well.

Mr. Speaker, again, as I know them, I know that they are representative of an extraordinary group of people that we call the United States Capitol Police.

On January 6, when the rioters first breached the Capitol's defenses, these officers acted without delay, according to their training, to get me quickly to a safe location, but they couldn't get everybody. And so many were still in this Chamber as the insurrectionists cried for the lives of Members of Congress.

Capitol Police checked in with staff and did their best to get us information in a situation that was chaotic and rapidly changing for us, but more importantly, for them on the front lines. My security detail until the last Congress had been led by an officer, who now serves in the force in a more senior capacity. He was by my side almost every day for nearly two decades. I came to know him and his family well, just as I have other members of my detail. As I said, they are like family to all of us in the majority leader's office. I know that is true of the minority leader's office and the whip's office and the Speaker's office and the Democratic whip's office, and our Senate counterparts.

The senior officer on my detail formerly was present at the Capitol on January 6, and he acted heroically, and he was the one that tried to save the life of the woman who was shot—who was an insurrectionist—because he stood next to her, unarmed, when that incident occurred. He acted heroically in trying to keep the rioters away from the House Chamber and in responding when one of them was shot in the hallway, as I just pointed out.

I know that the events of that day still weigh very heavily on him and on each of us—on his colleagues, on all of us. And I hope that he and his colleagues know that their grief weighs heavily on all of us whom they protect and serve.

President Joseph Biden, in speaking yesterday to the family of Officer Evans, showed empathy. He showed that he felt their pain, their concerns, their trauma. And I would urge all my colleagues, when you see members of the United States Capitol Police, uniformed or in plain clothes, that you thank them.

Mr. Speaker, I talked about Officer Chestnut. Wendy, his wife, as I said, was here yesterday. He was shot in the back by the assailant, who then shot Officer Gibson in the office that I now occupy. It was Tom DeLay's office at that point in time.

Mr. Speaker, we thank them, we honor them, but the way we really need to respond to them is to make sure they have the resources, the training, the equipment, and the authority to respond to those who confront them with violence and fatal force.

We lost Officer Sicknick. This Capitol was invaded because there were restraints, frankly, on the United States Capitol Police. We need to make sure that they have the authority to respond, to protect this Capitol, this democracy, our Members, our staff, the visitors to this Capitol, but also, importantly, themselves.

We know that this is a difficult moment and the Capitol Police force is facing challenges like never before in its 193-year history.

In the early 1960s, I worked here as an intern in a United States Senator's office, and I had a number of friends who also were in law school or some other school, who were "Capitol cops" we called them. Thankfully, the risks were minimal. That is not true today. And as the risks are great, we must respond robustly to ensure that we have the capacity and the will to meet those risks.

Mr. Speaker, may God bless and protect our U.S. Capitol Police officers.

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PROTECTING AMERICANS' CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. JOYCE) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JOYCE of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, the Second Amendment is a fundamental piece of the U.S. Constitution. The right to keep and bear arms is one of Americans' inalienable freedoms. This has been true for centuries, and despite what the White House would like you to think, this is still true.

Right now, the left is advancing unprecedented threats to Americans' Second Amendment rights. Just last week, the President rolled out two executive orders that would restrict the rights of law-abiding citizens. The President proudly announced that he is willing to undercut our core constitutional liberties. With his pen and, I might add, without Congress, the President can singlehandedly unravel our rights.